

New program eases tedious editing

Have you ever had the chore of reviewing a long contract or document to look for changes made by another party? If so, you know how tedious and time-consuming it can be. Now, with a \$99.95 program from JuriSoft Inc. of Cambridge, Mass., you can compare documents quickly on your IBM PC or PC-compatible computer.

Dubbed the "instant redliner," CompareRite allows you to see all changes made at a glance, either on the screen or printed out. The changes can be displayed in whatever format you find most readable — italics, boldface, in brackets or even in color if you have a color monitor.

Obvious candidates for CompareRite are law firms and legal departments of corporations where revisions and additions to contracts and other documents are commonplace. It's also ideal for

companies where product manuals are constantly updated.

Here's where CompareRite shines:

- ✓ When several people make revisions to the same material and the results need to be merged together in a hurry. In legal offices, this may be done as a courtesy to clients or opposing counsel.

- ✓ When changes need to be made at different times. You can use several display formats simultaneously. For instance, all additions to a given document can be italicized, while deletions are shown in brackets. This way, an ongoing record of revisions can be seen.

- ✓ When preparing books, newspapers or technical documents. Changes made by editors and proofreaders can be instantly compared to the original.

But CompareRite has a negative side. It only catches changes to the

text. It ignores changes for new spacing, tabs, margins or columns. Also, word wrapping and page numbering will be thrown off by all the extra notes made by the program in the text. This makes it almost impossible to see any esthetic changes in the way the new document appears on the printed page.

Another limitation is that while CompareRite claims that the program is easy for novices to use, it can get rather complicated. If you give a document that's been "red-lined" with CompareRite to someone unfamiliar with the program, they may need a lengthy explanation of what was included in brackets, what was highlighted, etc.

CompareRite works with a variety of word processing programs commonly used in business settings, including Microsoft Word, WordPerfect and WordStar. I found the manual to be clear and easy to understand.

How does the program compare with other similar-function programs? This one is among the best I've seen. Other more expensive

programs such as ForComment — \$195 for the single-author version or \$995 for up to 16 reviewers — allow different people's comments to be added to a document and identified separately, so that just one person then reviews everyone's comments and summarizes the changes. ForComment's approach is different, and has a number of pros and cons. I'll compare it with CompareRite next week.

Should you buy CompareRite for just occasional use? No, it's probably not worth the trouble. But in law offices and other business situations where documents are compared every day — and where thousands or hundreds of thousands of dollars might depend on every comma and period — it's indispensable.

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